Chapter 13
Training and Qualifications

The FWS Fire Management Handbook incorporates, by reference, all guidance in the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations Handbook (Redbook, NFES #2724) Chapter 13 in addition to the following FWS specific clarifications:

Policy

Refuge personnel will meet NWCG PMS 310-1, Wildland Fire Qualification Guide training, experience, and fitness levels for prescribed fire and suppression positions unless otherwise specified in this handbook. All personnel funded with fire funds who are hired under a position description containing firefighting duties will meet PMS 310-1 requirements for the appropriate fire position. Individuals will not be assigned to duties for which they lack training and qualification. All personnel hired as primary firefighters must meet the arduous fitness standard to maintain full fire funding and if the position is career status, arduous is required to meet special retirement considerations for fire.

Prescribed Fire Fitness Exemption- If a Refuge Manager or Project Leader believes the arduous fitness requirement is not appropriate in their local prescribed fire operations they may request an exception using the Prescribed Fire Crewmember Exception Request found at the end of this chapter to use the Prescribed Fire Crewmember (RXCM) qualification at a moderate fitness level in lieu of Firefighter Type 2 (FFT2). This qualification can not be used for suppression operations and prescribed fire burn plans must address contingency resources accordingly. A prescribed fire crew member can be used to hold an original prescribed fire perimeter while initial attack is being conducted on an escape by fully qualified suppression personnel. If suppression operations move into extended attack the entire fire must be staffed with resources qualified for suppression operations. Exception approval must be documented in the applicable Refuge Fire Management Plan and shall be used on approved Service managed lands only. State, local cooperators and contractors working on federal agency prescribed fires must meet the NWCG PMS 310-1 standards unless local agreements and/or contracts specify otherwise. For more information see the PMS 310-1, Wildland Fire Qualification Guide (2009), and the Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation Procedures Guide.   The Prescribed Fire Crewmember position (RXCM) is available in IQCS for use in tracking individual experience at a Moderate fitness level.

Fire Management Curriculum

The curriculum supporting fire management qualifications and position certification is explained in detail in the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualification System Guide, PMS 310-1 (http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/docs/docs.htm). Details relating to course descriptions and trainee/instructor qualifications are provided in the NWCG Field Manager's Course Guide , PMS 901-1 (NFES 2194) (http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/training/fmcg.pdf). Training needs analyses are developed each year at refuge, regional and national levels. A refuge or region is responsible for sponsoring 100 and 200 level courses. The Regional Fire Management Coordinator (RFMC) or Geographical Area Board determines intermediate level (300 and 400) training needs. Nominations for intermediate level courses should be routed to Regional Fire Management Coordinators for prioritization. Each course lead

instructor provides successful trainees with certificates of completion upon conclusion of the course. All NWCG-approved training packages and course materials are readily available through the Publications Management System at the National Interagency Fire Center. NWCG National Fire Equipment System Catalog Part 2: Publications, PMS 449-2 (NFES 3362), identifies all materials and ordering procedures and is updated each spring.

Attendance at national level (500 and 600) courses and attendee prioritization will follow local geographic area processes. Regional Fire Management Coordinators will forward priority candidates for these courses through their geographic area training representatives. Nominations should be consistent with regional or geographic board direction. Regions shall follow established Geographic Area and National Advanced Fire and Resource Institute protocol when nominating employees to S-520 or S-620.

Fire Management Instructors - Each Region is responsible for the selection, training, and certification of an adequate number of Fish and Wildlife Service instructors for fire management training. The funding for fire training instructors for local and geographic area level courses is a local or Regional fire management responsibility. The funding for fire training instructors for national level courses is a responsibility of the Fire Management Branch.

NWCG Course Equivalency – An equivalent course is determined by agency identified "evaluators" to be equal to a NWCG approved course. Awarding course equivalency is an agency specific responsibility. Only agencies have the authority to certify their employees meet NWCG training requirements when alternative course offerings are used. Courses being reviewed for equivalency must have:
  • A reason the alternative course was used or developed;
  • A benefit gained through awarding course equivalency such as:
    – cost savings
    – broadened target audience
    – enhanced learning experience for students

The Region seeking a course equivalency should conduct a detailed analysis and document their findings on the USFWS Course Equivalency template. The analysis will then be forwarded to the National Office for final approval. A new analysis must be completed when the equivalent NWCG course is revised to ensure course equivalency continues. All course equivalency determinations will be posted on the Fire Management SharePoint site (http://sharepoint.fws.net/Programs/nifc/training/Shared%20Documents/).

Incident Qualifications and Certification System
The Refuge Fire Management Officer is responsible for input and maintenance of all pertinent refuge employee data and for ensuring that employees are trained, qualified, and certified at levels which meet preplanned needs for appropriate management response, initial attack and prescribed fire, and for ensuring the accuracy of annual Incident Qualification Cards. The Certifying Official (i.e. Refuge Manager or Project Leader) confirms through the issuance of an incident qualification card that an individual is qualified to perform in a specified position. The Incident Qualification Card has a currency of 12 months.

The Incident Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS) allows individuals to track experience gained on severity assignments where wildland fires do not occur. Individuals should use the event code PP (Preparedness/Preposition/Mobilization) in IQCS to track experience gained on severity assignments. All wildland fire experience gained while on a severity assignment will be coded to the appropriate incident identifier in IQCS.

Trainees may complete appropriate tasks in a position task book while on a severity assignment. Consult the PMS 310-1, Wildland Fire Qualification Guide, for event code definitions. A severity assignment does not constitute a wildfire, wildland fire use, or prescribed fire assignment until such time as an actual fire occurs.

Only PMS 310-1 and USFWS specific positions are approved for use by agency employees. Approved agency positions are identified in IQCS under the FWS SetID. Service employees should not utilize agency specific positions available under other agency specific SetID's. IQCS Account Managers will proactively maintain organization codes for which they are responsible. Employees that are no longer employed by the FWS should be placed in INAC upon termination of duty.

National Incident Management System (NIMS) Training Requirements
Service personnel, who may become involved in emergency response activities, including wildland fire, are required to meet minimum training requirements established by the Department of Homeland Security in order to be NIMS compliant. Information regarding specific position requirements is outlined in the Service NIMS required training memorandum from the Director dated December 5, 2008 and the DOI Bulletin dated May 31, 2007.

Interagency Fire Program Management (IFPM) Requirements
Service personnel in IFPM covered positions must meet the NWCG qualification and additional required training requirements identified for their positions. Information regarding specific position requirements is available at http://www.ifpm.nifc.gov/.

Physical Fitness and Conditioning
Employees serving in wildland fire positions that require a fitness rating of arduous as a condition of employment are authorized one hour of duty time each work day for physical fitness conditioning. Employees not having a fitness rating of arduous as a condition of employment, but who are required by a Critical Performance element or other written agreement to maintain an arduous level, will be authorized three hours per week of duty time for physical fitness condition. All other wildland firefighting personnel holding qualifications requiring ratings of moderate or arduous may be authorized, by their supervisor, up to three hours per week of duty time for fitness conditioning. Prior to any duty time being allowed for physical fitness conditioning, employees and supervisors must agree, in writing, what physical conditioning activities the employee will engage in, and when and where they will occur. Activities outside of the agreement will not be authorized or allowed. A combination of activities designed to increase both physical strength and aerobic fitness, while minimizing the possibility of physical injury, should be utilized.

Firefighting Personnel

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Specific Position Standards and Criteria

Position taskbooks can be initiated prior to the completion of the required training. However, all position training requirements must be completed prior to position certification.

Any individual who has begun the evaluation process need not take any newly required NWCG course(s) for that position. Additionally, personnel who are qualified in a position prior to the implementation of this revision may retain certification at the discretion of their Certifying Official. To qualify in any other position, the individual must meet the standards identified herein.

National Incident Management System (NIMS) training requirements have been applied to all agency specific positions identified herein. Individuals must complete these additional training requirements to be considered qualified for these positions.

Engine Operator (ENOP)

REQUIRED TRAINING
National Incident Command System (IS-700.a)
Introduction to ICS (ICS-100, I-100, IS100, or Q462)
Intermediate Fire Behavior (S-290)
Followership to Leadership (L-280)
Local or Geographic Area Engine Academy
Annual Refresher Training (RT-130)

REQUIRED EXPERIENCE
Firefighter (FFT1), Experience on engine crew
<div align="center">+</div>
Successful completion of the BLM/FWS Engine Operator taskbook

PHYSICAL FITNESS LEVEL
Arduous

OTHER POSITION ASSIGNMENTS THAT WILL MAINTAIN CURRENCY:
Engine Boss

ADDITIONAL TRAINING WHICH SUPPORTS DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:
Portable Pumps and Water Use (S-211)
Driving for the Fire Service (S-216)
Fire Operation in the Urban Interface (S-215)

Additional Information:

- The ENOP position is available in IQCS under the FWS SetID. Service employees should not utilize positions available under other agency specific SetID's.
- IS-700.a and ICS-100 are available online at http://training.fema.gov/IS/NIMS.asp

Prescribed Fire Burn Boss Type 2 (RXB2)

REQUIRED TRAINING
Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior Calculations (S-390)
Annual Fireline Safety Refresher (RT-130)
Prescribed Fire Burn Plan Preparation (RX-341)
Prescribed Fire Implementation (RX-301)
National Incident Command System (IS-700)

REQUIRED EXPERIENCE
Satisfactory performance as a Firing Boss, Single Resource (FIRB)
+
Satisfactory performance as an Incident Commander Type 4 (ICT4)
+
 Successful Completion of the RXB2 taskbook
PHYSICAL FITNESS LEVEL
Moderate

OTHER POSITION ASSIGNMENTS THAT WILL MAINTAIN CURRENCY

Prescribed Fire Burn Boss Type 1
Prescribed Fire Manager Type 1
Prescribed Fire Manager Type 2
ADDITIONAL TRAINING WHICH SUPPORTS DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE ANDSKILLS
Fireline Leadership (L-380)
Introduction to Fire Effects (RX-310)

Additional Information:
- The RXB2 position is available in IQCS under the FWS SetID. Service employees should not utilize positions available under other agency specific SetID's.
- IS-700.a is available online at http://training.fema.gov/IS/NIMS.asp

Prescribed Fire Burn Boss Type 3 (RXB3)

REQUIRED TRAINING
National Incident Command System (IS-700.a)
Introduction to ICS (ICS-100, I-100, IS100, or Q462)
Intermediate Fire Behavior(S-290)
Annual Refresher Training (RT-130)

REQUIRED EXPERIENCE
Incident Commander, Type 5
                    Or
Advanced Firefighter/Squad Boss
                    +
Successful Completion of the RXB3 taskbook

PHYSICAL FITNESS LEVEL
Moderate

OTHER POSITION ASSIGNMENTS THAT WILL MAINTAIN CURRENCY:
Prescribed Fire Burn Boss Type 2
Prescribed Fire Burn Boss Type 1
Prescribed Fire Manager Type 1
Prescribed Fire Manager Type 2

**ADDITIONAL TRAINING WHICH SUPPORTS DEVELOPMENT OF
KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:**
Ignition Operations (S-234)

Limitations:
The RXB3 position use guidelines can be found in the Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning
and Implementation Procedures Reference Guide found at
http://www.nwcg.gov/branches/ppm/fpc/archives/fire_policy/rx/rxfireguide.pdf .

Additional Information:
- The RXB3 position is available in IQCS under the FWS SetID. Service
  employees should not utilize positions available under other agency specific
  SetID's.
  IS-700.a and ICS-100 are available online at http://training.fema.gov/IS/NIMS.asp

Faller Class A/B/C

REQUIRED TRAINING
National Incident Command System (IS-700.a)
Introduction to ICS (ICS-100, I-100, IS100, or Q462)
Wildland Fire Chain Saws (S-212)
Annual Chainsaw Refresher Training
RT-212 Annual Chainsaw Refresher Training
REQUIRED EXPERIENCE
Successful Completion of the BLM/NPS/FWS Faller A/B/C taskbook

PHYSICAL FITNESS LEVEL
Arduous

OTHER POSITION ASSIGNMENTS THAT WILL MAINTAIN CURRENCY:
None

ADDITIONAL TRAINING WHICH SUPPORTS DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:
None

Additional Information:
- "A" positions can fell trees up to 8 inches DBH, "B" positions can fell trees up to 24 inches DBH, and "C" positions have no limit on tree size
- All FWS saw operators on wildland and prescribed fire incidents must complete the NWCG S-212 course, including the position Task Book appropriate to the "A" class operations.
- The individual tasks required for completion of the "B" Task Book and the final evaluation for the Class "B" saw operations must be verified by a qualified Class "B" or "C" saw operator.
- The individual tasks required for completion of the "C" Task Book and the final evaluation for the Class "C" saw operators must be verified by a region approved Class "C" Final Evaluator.
- Each of the regions will certify and maintain a list of current, qualified Class "B" and "C" saw operators, approved as Class "B" or "C" Final Evaluators.
- The certification of "C" class evaluators will remain the responsibility of the regional agency administrator or delegate.
- Faller A/B/C positions are available in IQCS under the FWS SetID. Service employees should not utilize positions available under other agency specific SetID's.
- Information regarding RT-212 course content is available at http://sharepoint.fws.net/Programs/nifc/operations/default.aspx
- IS-700.a and ICS-100 are available online at http://training.fema.gov/IS/NIMS.asp

Prescribed Fire Crew Member (RXCM)

REQUIRED TRAINING
National Incident Command System (IS-700.a)
Introduction to ICS (ICS-100, I-100, IS100, or Q462)
Firefighter Training (S-130)
Introduction to Fire Behavior (S-190)
Human Factors on the Fireline (L-180)*
Annual Refresher Training (RT-130)

REQUIRED EXPERIENCE
None

PHYSICAL FITNESS LEVEL
Moderate

OTHER POSITION ASSIGNMENTS THAT WILL MAINTAIN CURRENCY:
None

ADDITIONAL TRAINING WHICH SUPPORTS DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:
Wildland Fire Chain Saws (S-212)
Portable Pumps and Water Use (S-211)

Additional Information:
- L-180, Human Factors on the Fireline has been incorporated into the 2003 revision of S-130, Firefighter Training.
- Upon the release of this version of the Fire Management Handbook the RXCM position may be used by personnel on approved Service lands in lieu of Firefighter Type 2 (FFT2) if proper authorization has been granted by the appropriate regional line officer. Approval procedures are outlined earlier in this chapter of the Fire Management Handbook, 2010.
- The RXCM position is available in IQCS under the FWS SetID. Service employees should not utilize positions available under other agency specific SetID's.
- IS-700.a and ICS-100 are available online at http://training.fema.gov/IS/NIMS.asp

Dozer Operator (DZOP)

REQUIRED TRAINING
National Incident Command System (IS-700.a)
Introduction to ICS (ICS-100, I-100, IS100, or Q462)
Firefighter Training (S-130)
Introduction to Fire Behavior (S-190)
Human Factors on the Fireline (L-180)
Annual Refresher Training (RT-130)
Intermediate Fire Behavior (S-290)
FWS Heavy Equipment Course SAF2002 (Dozer) or SAF2000 (Agricultural Tractor)

REQUIRED EXPERIENCE
None

PHYSICAL FITNESS LEVEL
Moderate

OTHER POSITION ASSIGNMENTS THAT WILL MAINTAIN CURRENCY:
None

ADDITIONAL TRAINING WHICH SUPPORTS DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:
S-232 Dozer Boss (Single Resource)
S-233 Tractor/Plow Boss (Single Resource)

Additional Information:
- The Dozer Initial Attack (DZIA) position is not approved for FWS use.

- The DZOP position is available in IQCS under the FWS SetID. Service employees should not utilize positions available under other agency specific SetID's.
- IS-700.a and ICS-100 are available online at http://training.fema.gov/IS/NIMS.asp

Tractor Plow Operator (TPOP)

REQUIRED TRAINING
National Incident Command System (IS-700.a)
Introduction to ICS (ICS-100, I-100, IS100, or Q462)
Firefighter Training (S-130)
Introduction to Fire Behavior (S-190)
Human Factors on the Fireline (L-180)
Annual Refresher Training (RT-130)
Intermediate Fire Behavior (S-290)
FWS Heavy Equipment Course SAF2002 (Dozer) or SAF2000 (Agricultural Tractor)

REQUIRED EXPERIENCE
None

PHYSICAL FITNESS LEVEL
Moderate

OTHER POSITION ASSIGNMENTS THAT WILL MAINTAIN CURRENCY:
None

ADDITIONAL TRAINING WHICH SUPPORTS DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:
S-232 Dozer Boss (Single Resource)
S-233 Tractor/Plow Boss (Single Resource)

Additional Information:
- The Tractor Plow Initial Attack (TPIA) position is not approved for FWS use.
- The TPOP position is available in IQCS under the FWS SetID. Service employees should not utilize positions available under other agency specific SetID's.
- IS-700.a and ICS-100 are available online at http://training.fema.gov/IS/NIMS.asp

All Hazard Positions:

- Information for FWS All hazard positions will be posted on the Fire management SharePoint site. (http://sharepoint.fws.net/Programs/nifc/operations/all%20hazard/default.aspx)

RX Assessment Documentation-

Refuge Name:

Provide a situational assessment of the refuge's prescribed fire program:

1. How many prescribed fires do you anticipate will require the use of the Prescribed Fire Crew Member (RXCM) qualification per year? _____

2. Describe the refuge's previous experience using the moderate fitness rating on prescribed fire projects. _____

_____

_____

Provide a hazard assessment:

1. Discuss the range of fuels to be burned using the RXCM qualification and the associated fire behavior. _____

_____

_____

2. Describe refuge topography and walking conditions. _____

_____

_____

Describe the hazard controls the refuge will put in place to minimize risk to employees with the RXCM qualification:

1. Can smoke exposure be limited during operations? _____

_____

_____

2. What resources are available for suppression operations requiring arduous fitness in the event of an escape requiring immediate initial action and can contingency plans properly cover this situation? _____

_____

_____

3. Describe the tactics and equipment used by the RXCM position. _____

_____

_____

Provide an evaluation plan in which an exception decision will be monitored and reviewed:

_____

_____

_____

_____   _____
Prepared by/Date   Refuge Manager/Project Leader/Date

_____   _____
Regional Fire Mgmt. Coordinator/Date   Regional Line Officer Approval/Date